ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

COCHIN STATE

FOR THE YEAR 1110 M. E. (1934—1935 A. D.)

BY

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GOVERNMENT ARCHAEOLOGIST, THE STATE MUSEUM,

TRICHUR

ERNAKULAM:

PRINTED AT THE COCHIN GOVERNMENT PRESS

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22 JUN 1936

PROCEEDNGS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF COCHIN.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

Administration Report—1110—Archæological Department.

Read letter C. No. 41/1111, dated 28th October 1935, from the Government Archæologist.

Order D. 3. l. 48/1111, dated 20th February 1936.

Recorded.

(By order)
M. P. CHERIAN
Joint Secretary to Government.

To

The Government Archaeologist.
Copy to Sarvadhikariakar with the Report.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

COCHIN STATE

FOR THE YEAR 1110 M. E. (1934=1935 A. D.)

Personnel. During the year under review I continued to be in charge of the Department as the State Archæologist. I held also the post of the Secretary to the Rama Varma Research Institute, whose affairs are managed by a committee of five members including the Secretary nominated by the Government. The Archæological Department continued to work without any addition in the establishment which consisted of a clerk and two peons.

Tours. 2. In spite of the heavy increase of routine work in the office, I toured in most parts of the Cochin-Kanayannur, the Cranganur, the Trichur and the Talapalli Taluks in connection with the conservation and study of ancient monuments. In the Chittur Taluk, I visited Nemmara, Kairady and Tiruvazhiyad, and camped for five days in the latter for excavating an ancient site at the foot of the Puncherimala, already referred to in the previous year's report. Altogether I spent fifty-eight days outside the head-quarters during the year.

Conservation. 3. The ancient monuments at Kunnamkulam, Porkulam, Kattakampal, Chalakkudi, Mullurkara, Tiruvanchikulam, Cranganur, Chennamangalam, Trichur and Mattancheri were visited and notes were submitted along with the monthly diaries regarding the condition of the monuments in those places. Visits were also paid to the inscribed tablets put up by the Department on the Nedumkotta at Chalakkudi, in the Cheraman parambu at Tiruvanchikulam and in the Vaipikotta Seminary at Chennamangalam, all of which were repainted during the year.

Mural paintings. 4. Considerable time was devoted during the year to a fresh survey and study of the mural paintings in the Mattancheri Palace at Cochin and on the Srikoil of Sankaranarayana in the Vadakkunnathan temple, Trichur. As a result of this, photographic reproductions of a number of these latter could be included in this report. (Vide Appendix A and Plates Nos. 1 to 15).

5. About one hundred and eighty sq. feet of the ancient murals recently discovered on the walls of the Srikoil of the Siva temple at Chemmanthatta were traced out in lines and a portion reproduced on paper at a cost of Rs. 150. This work was so ably and faithfully executed by the artist, Mr. K. Madhava Warriar, whose services to the Department have already been acknowledged.

6. Besides, the Department was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing copies of some of the select specimens of the Cochin murals to be presented to the Art Gallery at Trivandrum recently opened by the Government of Travancore. These paintings—about one hundred and twenty sq. feet in all—have been described by Dr. James H. Cousins, the organiser of the Chitralayam, on page 21 of the Catalogue of Exhibits compiled by him.

Photography. 7. About a dozen photographs of the different earthen vessels, burial urns and pieces of iron implements deposited in the Archæological Museum were taken to illustrate the annual report. The stock of negatives and prints of the previous years was also maintained. In the absence of a photographer, this work was attended to by me at my leisure time.

Museum. 8. The Archæological Museum of the Department could not make much progress for want of sufficient accommodation. During my tours, numerous architectural and sculptural pieces and inscriptions suitable for the Museum were noted by me, but they could not be transferred to the head-quarters as there is no convenience for housing them. The State is so rich in ancient architectural and sculptural work that a first class Museum of antiquities and fine arts could be built up if proper accommodation were made available.

Publication. 9. The administration report for 1109 was published towards the end of the year with as many as twenty-three blocks of interesting archæological specimens. A short note on the marriage scene of Umā as depicted on the walls of the Mattancheri Palace at Cochin was contributed by me to the Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art at the instance of its editor, M. Stella Kramrisch. This note along with the blocks is reproduced in this report by kind permission of the latter as Appendix B. (See also Plates Nos. 19 to 24.)

Library. 10. Fourteen new books were added to the office reference library in 1110, of which 5 were purchased and the rest received free. A list of the books newly added is given in this report as Appendix C.

The Rama Varma Research Institute. 11. The Rama Varma Research Institute attached to the Archœological Department continued to do very useful work.

12: There was no change in the personnel of the Committee of the Institute, which met three times during the year to carry on ordinary routine work. Professor K. Rama Pisharody of the Annamala University, himself a member of the Committee, delivered a course of two lectures on "Kerala Theatre" at Trichur under the auspices of the Institute, which was largely attended. The publication of the fourth number of the Bulletin, which work was entrusted to Mr. V. K. Rama Menon, a member of the Committee, had to be delayed for reasons beyond control. The reference library attached to the Institute contained 908 books at the end of the year, of which 67 were newly added. A list of these books is appended. (*vide* Appendix D.) The total income of the Institute for the year was Rs. 357-3-10, and expenditure Rs. 724—6—5. The deficit amount was met from the reserve fund lying to the credit of the Istitute in the Trichur treasury.

Expenditure. 13. The expenditure of the Archæological Department for the year amounted to Rs. 2,717 as against Rs. 2,886 in the previous year. A classified list of the items of expenditure for 1110 is given in Appendix E.

14. The Ancient Monuments Preservation Regulation, IX of 1110, which had been awaiting the sanction of His Highness the Maharaja, received the Royal assent on the 27th day of Makaram 1110 corresponding to the 9th day of February 1935. Though it did not actually come into working order during the year under report, steps were taken to bring the Regulation into effect at the earliest opportunity. With the passing of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Regulation the scope of the Department has been considerably enlarged; and I would appeal to the enlightened public to extend their help to the Department by taking a genuine and creative interest in its endeavours. **Conclusion.**

Office of the Government Archæologist,
State Museum, Trichur,
28th October 1935.
11th Thulam 1111.

P. ANUJAN ACHAN,
Government Archæologist.

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON THE PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS OF THE CENTRAL SHRINE OF THE VADAKKUNNĀTHAN TEMPLE, TRICHUR

Situation.

The Vaḍakkunnāthan (or Kailāsanāthan) temple at Trichur is situated on the apex of a rising ground in the centre of the town, surrounded by thick and lofty walls with four massive Gopurams on four sides. There are 3 main shrines in the temple, of which only the central shrine now contains old mural paintings, while the other two contain oil paintings done very recently. These two shrines also contained similar old murals till a decade ago, but they were scrapped out by people ignorant of the value of these priceless treasures, and cheap oil paintings were put up in their place. An eminent artist who recently examined these paintings remarked to me, when I asked him about his impression of them, "Even an unsophisticated man in the street can notice at a glance what a gulf of difference exists between these recent creations and the old murals in the central shrine."

General condition.

Unfortunately several of the existing murals are damaged beyond repair, and the few that are left un-damaged will soon meet the same fate unless proper precautions are taken to protect them. The lower portions of the paintings have now become almost obliterated, mainly owing to the contact of oil which is generally applied to the basement of these shrines. The other reason for the decay of some of the colours is the smoke emanating from the burning lamps that are hung all round the shrines. On the outer verandas of the Vaḍakkunnāthan temple there existed extensive mural paintings, about a hundred sq. feet of which may still be seen, the remaining portions having been damaged by constant white-washes over them during the festival days.

The Paintings.

The murals in the central shrine depicts mainly the battle-scenes from the Mahābhārata. The space covered by these murals is about 150 sq. feet. In this report I have reproduced ten scenes from the Mahābhārata, a few decorative designs, and two paintings of Śiva, including the Tāṇḍava dance. I have reproduced here only the outlines of these paintings, which are in colours in the original. These have been copied out for the Department by the artist, Mr. K. Madhava Warriar.

Technique, Etc.

I leave the technique and beauty of these murals to be discussed in detail by art critics.

Date.

From a two-line inscription written in black letters in Malayālam characters on the southern side of the wall of the central shrine over the *sala*, it appears that these paintings were repainted by about 1731 A. D. The work was completed by one Krishna (assisted by his student), who was himself the disciple of

one Netranārāyaṇa,* at the orders of the Yogiyāthiri—the administrative head of the temple—on the *Kali* day, 1,765,203, that is, on the 7th of Vrischigam 907 M. E. (23rd September 1731 A. D.)

The Inscription.

I give below the inscription in full:

Yogīśvaras citrakṛtau vṛṣālaye
yan Netranārāyaṇaśiṣyam ādiśat।
likhan aśeṣam sapunar yathāpuram
Kṛṣṇas saśiṣhyas sudine samāpayat॥
Sādhavaḥ kṣantum arhanti।
Likhannaśeṣam sapunaḥ kaliḥ॥

---

* *Netran* is a common name among the Nambudiri Brahmans of Kerala. *Kannan* may be a synonym for *Netran*. It is used as a proper name among the non-Brahmans of Malabar. Netran Nambudiri and Kannan Nayar are names quite frequent among the Malayalies. *Kannan-Narayanan* is also a title, I am informed, given to and used by the senior member of the family of Azhuvancheri Tamprakkal—a Nambudiri landlord of British Malabar.

APPENDIX B

A NOTE ON THE MARRIAGE SCENE OF UMĀ AS DEPICTED ON THE WALLS OF THE MATTANCHERI PALACE AT COCHIN

Cochin Murals.

Extensive mural paintings are found to exist on the walls of the ancient temples and palaces of Cochin. They belong to a period ranging from the 16th century A. D., and are considered to have been executed by local artists whose descendants may still be found living in Cochin and the borders of the neighbouring Travancore. The growth of this school of painting is stated to have reached its climax in the 17th century A. D., when the ancient temples at Trichur and Tiruvanchikulam and the palace at Mattancheri were decorated with wall paintings on a very large scale.

Siva's Marriage.

The Marriage Scene of Umā is one of the most interesting pieces of line drawings executed on the walls of the Mattancheri palace. It is divided into five scenes, and is depicted in a style throbbing with vitality and action. Although fundamentally religious, the scenes reveal an interest in secularism and contain subjects that are largely drawn from incidents connected with the social life of the Malayālis of the time. The marriage procession of Pārvathī, for instance, in which she is led by her numerous attendants with the accompaniment of music, represents a typical marriage procession of the Malayāli bride, and to a large extent reflects her home life and the religious ceremonies that precede the marriage. The stories illustrated are also continuous such as may be seen in the wall decorations of Ajanta and the Bhag. They represent incidents from the story of the marriage of Ṣiva and Pārvathī, the daughter of the Mountain God, as described by Kālidāsa in his Kumārasaṃbhava.

An Unfinished Mural.

These line drawings are the only paintings that have been left uncoloured in the Mattancheri palace. The artist could not have intended them to remain as such. He probably postponed colouring to some later occasion and so left them unfinished. This might probably help us to reveal the technique and methods adopted by this school of artists.

APPENDIX C

List of books added to the Office Reference Library in 1110

1. Travancore Archaeological Series Vol. VII, Part II—A. S. Ramanatha Ayyar.
2. Mysore Archaeological Survey—Epigraphia Carnatica. Vol. XIII, Part I.
3. Administration Report of the Archaeological Department for the year 1107. (Travancore).
4. Annual Report of the Madras Government Museum and Connemara Public Library for the year 1933-34.
5. Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology for the year 1932, Vol. VII.
6. Memoirs of the Archaeological survey of India No. 46.
7. Epigraphia Indica Vol. XXI (6 Parts).
8. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy for the year ending 31st March 1931.
9. Catalogue of wall-paintings from Ancient Shrines in Central Asia and Sistan.
10. Hampi Ruins (described and illustrated.)
11. List of Archaeological Photo-negatives of the late office of the Northern Circle.
12. Report on the Administration of Cochin for the year 1109 M. E.
13. Archaeological Survey of Mysore-Annual Report 1931.
14. Varendra Research Society's Monographs.

APPENDIX D

List of books added to the Institute Library in 1110

1. Dravidian Culture and its Diffusion. By T. K. Krishna Menon.
2. Administration report of the Archaeological Department of the Travancore State for the year 1105 M. E.
3. Administration report of the Archaeological Department of the Travancore State for the year 1106 M. E.
4. The Art of Kathakali. By R. Vasudeva Puduval.
5. Travancore Archaeological Series Vol: I (No. 1 to 16.) 11 books. T. A. Gopinatha Rao.

6.	Do.	do.	Vol. II	Part 1	do.
7.	Do.	do.	Vol. II	Part 2	do.
8.	Do.	do.	Vol. III	Part 3	do.
9.	Do.	do.	Vol. III	Part 1	—K. V. Subramania Ayyar.
10.	Do.	do.	Vol. III	Part 2	do.
11.	Do.	do.	Vol. IV	Part 1	do.
12.	Do.	do.	Vol. IV	Part 2	do.
13.	Do.	do.	Vol. V	Part 1	—A. S. Ramanatha Ayyar.
14.	Do.	do.	Vol. V	Part 2	do.
15.	Do.	do.	Vol. V	Part 3	do.
16.	Do.	do.	Vol. VI	Part 1	do.
17.	Do.	do.	Vol. VI	Part 2	.do
18.	Do.	do.	Vol. VII	Part 1	do.

19. The Folk songs of South India By Charles E. Gover.
20. Some Kshatriya Tribes of Ancient India By Bimala Charan Law.
21. Record of the Buddhistic Kingdom By Herbert A. Giles.
22. Town planning in India. By J. M. Linton Bogle.
23. (a) Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes
    (b) Sidelights on Social Life in Ancient India
    (c) Studies in Vatsyayanas' Kamasutra.
    } Haranchandra Chakladar.
24. Ancient India Education By F. E. Keay. M. A.
25. Architecture of Manasara Vol: IV (English translation) P. K Acharya.
26. Architecture of Manasara Vol. V (Illustrations of Architectural and Sculptural objects) By P. K. Acharya.
27. Indian Historical Quarterly 1934.
28. Annual Bibiliography of Indian Archaeology 1932, Vol. VII.
29. The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas Vol. I—Wistermark.
30. Do do Vol. II do
31. The Mystic Rose (A study of Primitive Marriage) Crawley
32. Humanity and its problems—Alfred Hook.
33. Mappillas or Moplahs—Major P. Holland—Pryor.

34. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India—No. 17—Pallava. Architecture, Part I (Early period) A. H. Longhurst.
35. The Stone Age of India—P. T. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
36. South Indian Customs—P. V. Jagadisayyar.
37. Hindu Mythology—W. J. Wilkins.
38. Sex—Patrick Geddes and Sir. J. Arthur Thomson.
39. Catalogue of Mysore Coins in the collection of the Government Museum, Bangalore—Capt. R. H. Campbell Tufnell, M. S. C., F. Z. S.
40. Manasara on Architecture and Sculpture, (Sanskrit Text with critical notes.—P. K. Acharya.
41. The University of Nalanda—H. D. Sankalia, M. A., L. L. B.
42. Early History of Kamarupa—Rai K. L. Barua Bahadur.
43. Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire (A. D. 1346—A. D. 1646) Vol. I—Dr. B. A. Saletore, M. A., Ph.D.
44. Do. do. Vol. II do.
45. The Origin and Development of Religion in Vedic Literature—P. S. Deshmukh.
46. The Script of Harappa and Mohanjodaro and its connection with the other scripts—G. R. Hunter.
47. Studies in Pallava History—Rev. H. Heras., S. J.
48. Proceedings and Transactions of the First Oriental Conference, Poona, Vol. I.
49. Do. do. Vol. II.
50. Do. Second do. Calcutta.
51. Do. Third do. Madras.
52. Do. Fourth do. Allahabad Vol. I.
53. Do. do. do. Vol. II.
54. Do. Fifth do. The Punjab Vol. I.
55. Do. do. do. Vol. II.
56. Proceedings and Transactions of the Sixth All India Oriental Conference— Patna.
57. Abdul Baha in Egypt—By Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.
58. The Song of the Caravan—do.
59. Hobson-Jobson—by Col. H. Yule and A. C. Burnell.
60. The Chinese and their History and Culture—Kenneth Scott Latourette.
61. A short History of Ancient Egypt—Arthur Weigall.
62. Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum Vol. I, Part 3.
63. Do. do. Vol. III, Part 1.
64. Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art Vol. I, No. 2.
65. Do. do. Vol. II, No. 1.
66. Do. do. Vol. II, No. 2.
67. History of Kerala. Vol. III—By K. P. Padmanabha Menon.

APPENDIX E

Classified list of expenditure of the Department for 1110

		Rs.	As.	Ps.
Establishment charges	..	2,034	1	0
Travelling allowance	..	146	5	0
Photography	..	20	12	0
Books and Periodicals	..	14	7	0
Blocks	..	97	5	0
Archaeological works	..	131	9	10
Conservation and purchase of curiosities	..	150	0	0
Furniture	..	22	0	0
Tour charges	..	17	0	0
Service labels	..	15	0	0
Postage	..	10	0	0
Office expenses	..	17	5	3
Stationery	..	27	4	0
Printed forms	..	13	14	0
Total	..	2,716	15	1

APPENDIX F

List of the Archaeological Reports and the Bulletins of the Rama Varma Research Institute so far published

			Rs.	As.	Ps.
Annual Report for	1100 (with 9 plates)	..	1	4	0
Do	1102 (with 6 plates)	..	0	12	0
Do	1103 (with 7 plates)	..	0	12	0
Do	1104 (with 8 plates)	..	0	12	0
Do	1107 ..	..		..	
Do	1108 ..	..		..	
Do	1109 (with 12 plates)	..	0	12	0
Institute Bulletin	No. 1—pp. 44 (foolscap—with plates)	..	2	4	0
Do	No. 2—pp. 71 (royal—with plates)	..	1	0	0
Do	No. 3—pp. 141 (royal—with plates)		3	0	0

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Krishna and Arjuna in the field of Kurukshetra.

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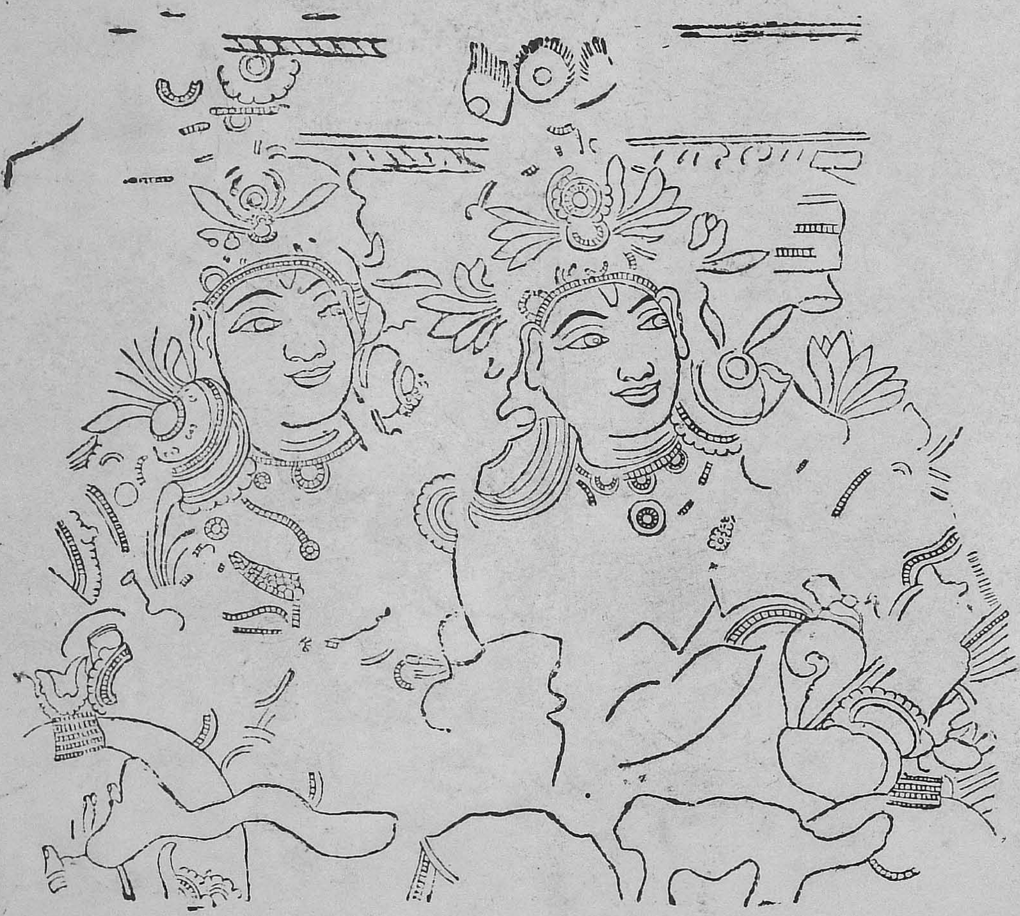
Plate No. II.



The Divine Lord and His heroic disciple.

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Plate No. III.

Visvarupa.

Plate No. IV.

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22 JUN 1933
MADRAS

The march towards the thick of the fight.

Plate No. V.

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Horses and elephants of the combatants face to face on the field of battle.

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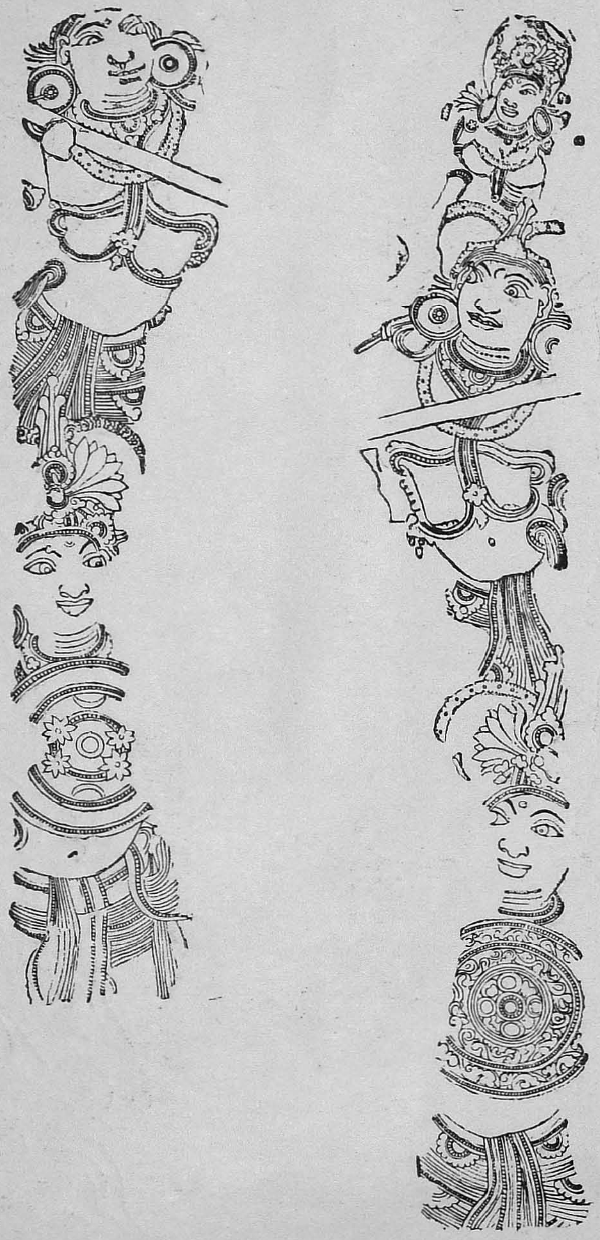
Plate No. VI.



Scenes on the battle field.

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LIBRARY

The archer and his victim—a scene on the field of Kurukshetra.

Plate No. VIII.

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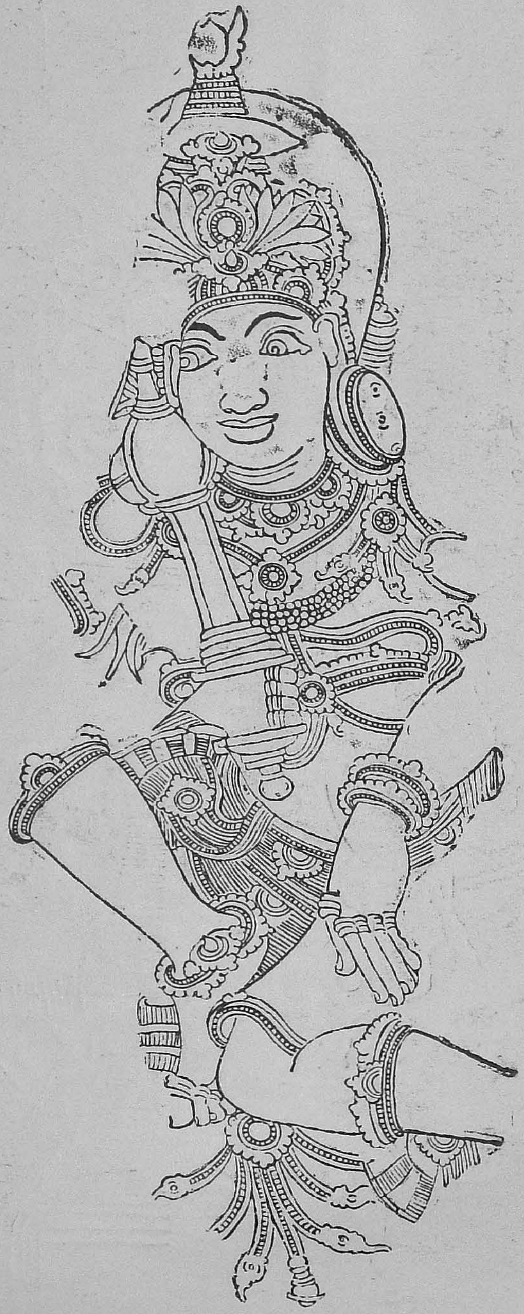

Bhima in a fighting mood.

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Krishna and Arjuna in the thick of the fight.

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MADRAS

Plate No. X.

Bhishma lying on the bed of arrows.

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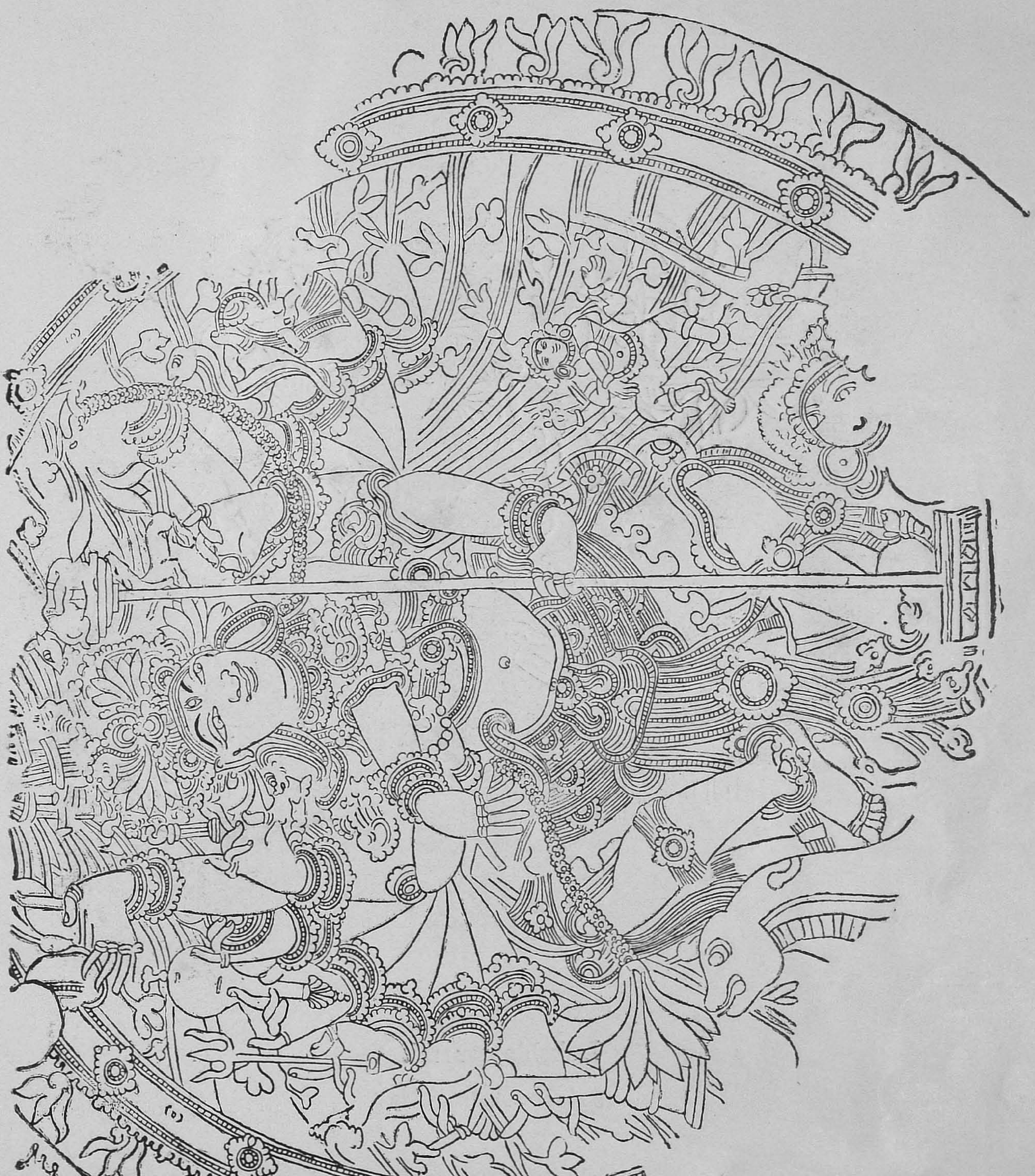

The *thandava* dance of Sivā.

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MADRAS

Dakshinamurthi.

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MADRAS

A decorative design.

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A decorative design with Ganesa seated in the centre.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
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MADRAS

A decorative design with two human figures (not identified).

COMMEMORATION PUBLIC LIBRARY
22 JUN 1936

The wall of the central shrine on which the mural drawings are found.

22 JUN 1936

A sculptural design on the wall of the central shrine showing the *Panjara* and the picture of Nataraja above.

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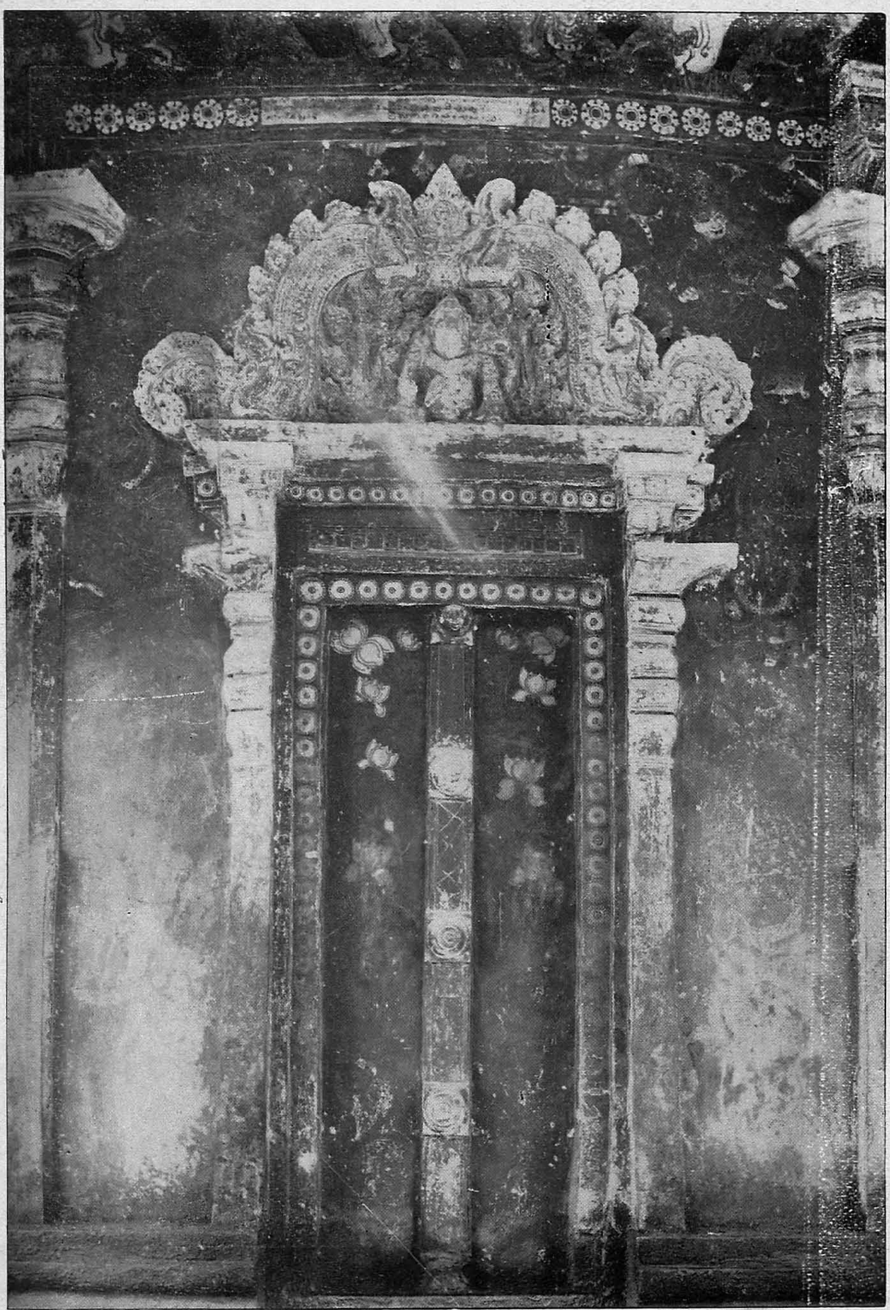

A sculptural design on the wall of the central shrine showing the *sala* and an inscription above.

22 JUN 19

Plate No. XIX.

Siva and the Saptarișis with Arundhaṭi.

22 JUN 1936

Plate No. XX.

Parvati is being made ready for her marriage procession.

C LIBRARY
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Plate No XXI.

Brahma and Vishnu accompanied by their wives proceeding to the marriage of Siva and Parvati.

Plate No. XXII.

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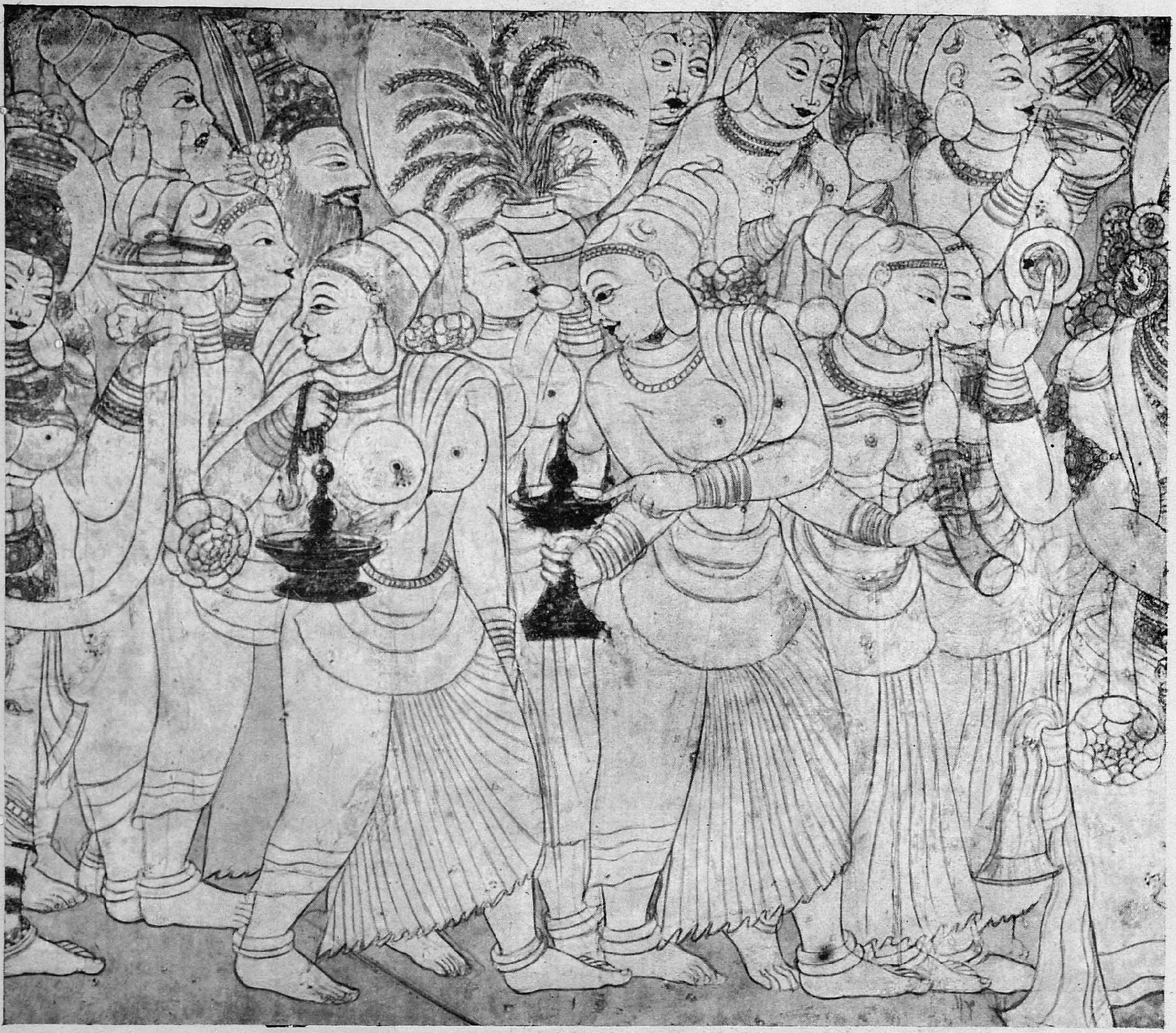
22 JUN 1936



The marriage procession of Parvati enters.

22 JUN 1936

Plate No. XXIII.

Vishnu presents Parvati to Siva in marriage.

Plate No. XXIV.

22 JUN 1939

Brahma blesses the couple and Narada plays marriage music on his *vina* (note the ladies adding *tala* and *sruti* to the music from behind).

SUPPLEMENT

THE PARASURAMA LEGEND AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE*

THE ANCESTRY OF PARASURAMA

Paraśurāma is a name totally unconnected with the Vedas. But his fore-father Bhṛgu is a well-known figure in Vedic literature. In the Taittirīya Saṃhita [1] the Bhṛgus are mentioned as priests in connection with Agnisthāpana and similar rites. Bhṛgu, in the singular, refers to the son of Varuṇa with the patronymic Vāruṇi;[2] while Bhṛgus, in the plural, refer to a priestly class devoted to the fire cult.[3] That the Bhṛgus possessed also the qualities of warriors will be found later on.

Jamadagni,[4] Paraśurāma's father, is mentioned as one of the mythical sages in the Ṛg Veda. In some passages Jamadagni's name is mentioned in such a way as to indicate that he is also the author of that hymn.[5] Jamadagni is quite a prominent figure in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhita, Vajaśanīyi Saṃhita, Pañchaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upanishad, etc.[6]

The name of Rāma has been mentioned in the Vedas in several places, but it does not appear likely that the word has any reference to Paraśurāma. In the Ṛg Veda (X. 93. 14) a "Rāma" is seen mentioned, but there it is only the name of an ordinary individual.

Another "Rāma" is mentioned in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (IV6. 1. 7) where he is only a teacher and a descendant of Upataśvina. In the Jaiminīya Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa (III 40. 1, IV 16. 1) yet another "Rāma" is mentioned as a descendant of Kratujāta, who is also a teacher. A fourth Rāma, Rāma Mārgaveya —a descendant of Mṛgu—is mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII 27. 3), who is learned in the sacred lore and is said to be connected with the priestly

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(1) Tai. Sam. IV, 6. 5. 2. V. 6. 8. 6. Macdonell-Keith—Vedic Index, Vol. II p. 109.

(2) Ait. Br. III. 34; Śat. Br. XI 6. 1. 1; Tait. Ar. IX I., etc.

(3) Ṛg Veda I. 58. 6; 127. 7; 143. 4; II 4. 2; III 2. 4; IV 7. 1; see also Macdonell-Keith—Vedic Index II, p. 108.

(4) Mahābhārata Āraṇyaparvan, ad. 66, v. 48. (The Bombay edition of the Mahābhārata is being quoted throughout).

(5) Ṛg Veda III 62.18; VIII 101.8; IX 62.24; 65.25.

(6) Vedic Index, I, p. 276.

race of the Syāparṇas. This Mārgaveya Rāma has once championed the cause of the Syāparṇas against a king called Viśvantara, who is said to have performed a sacrifice without the aid of the Syāparṇas, who were till then his family priests.[7] Scholars are inclined to believe that this fourth Rāma might probably be Paraśurāma.[8]

That the Bhṛgus, though a priestly class by profession, possessed also great warlike qualities, is evidenced by references to that effect in the Ṛg Veda. In the battle of the ten kings (Ṛg Veda VII. 18. 6)[9] the Bhṛgus are mentioned to have fought on the side of the Druhyus. Similarly, Bhṛgu's son, Chyavana is stated to have fought the Pāktha prince, Turyayāna, a worshipper of Indra (Ṛg Veda X. 61. 1—3). In the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, (III. 121—128) again we find the story of Vidanvant, the second son of Bhṛgu, supporting Chyavana, against Indra.[10] Coming down to the epics, to quote only one instance, we read in the Ādiparvan of the Mahābhārata the exploits of Chyavana's son, Aurva, meditating the destruction of all living beings to avenge the insult to his race by the sons of Kṛtavīrya.

These and similar anecdotes go to show the amount of ingenuity displayed by the epic writers to connect Paraśurāma with the great Bhṛgus referred to in the Vedas. The sixty-sixth adhyāya of the Ādiparvan of the Mahābhārata makes mention of Chyavana as the second son of Bhṛgu. "He (Chyavana) came out of his mother's womb in anger. He begat Aurva of great reputation. And Aurva begat Ṛchīka. And Ṛchīka even in his boyhood became possessed of great power and energy, and of every virtue. And Ṛchīka begat Jamadagni. And the high-souled Jamadagni had four sons. And the youngest of them all was Rāma (Paraśurāma). And Rāma was skilled in all weapons, and became the slayer of the Kṣhatriyas". We have an almost similar list of ancestors of Jamadagni given in the Āśvalāyana's list of the Pravara Ṛṣhis, in which is mentioned Bhārgava, Chyavana, Āpnavāna, Aurva and Jamadagni (Max Muller's History of Sanskrit Literature—1912 ed. p.p. 195—196.)

PARASURAMA IN THE MAHABHARATA.

Paraśurāma has a unique place in the epics, though his name is totally absent in the Vedic literature. In the Vanaparvan of the Mahābhārata, Paraśurāma's story is narrated in three adhyāyas (115, 116 and 117). Yudhiṣṭhira,

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(7) Ait. Brah. VII. 27; Vedic Index, I, p. 155: Muir's Sanskrit Texts, part I, p. 173.

(8) Mārgaveya is a difficult name. It may be simply, as Sāyaṇa says, the son of his mother Mṛgu; but Mṛgu may be a variety of Bhṛgu, and thus confirm Lassan's conjecture that this Rāma is Rāma, the son of Jamadagni, of the race of Bhṛgu, commonly called "Paraśurāma". Max Muller—History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 251 (1912 edition).

(9) Also see Vedic Index, I, p. 109.

(10) Ibid, Vol. II p. 265.

who repairs one night during his religious journey (tīrthayātra) to the skirts of the Mahendra hill, is being told how the members of the military caste were vanquished by Rāma, the son of Jamadagni of Bhṛgu's race, on the field of battle. Jamadagni was the son of Satyavatī, the beautiful daughter of King Gādhi, and his father was Ṛchīka the son of Bhṛgu (?). Jamadagni married Reṇukā, the daughter of King Prasenajit, and he had five sons (?), the last being Paraśurāma. Jamadagni devoted himself to the study of the Vedas and the practice of penances and became famous for his great austerities. At that time there lived a mighty monarch, Arjuna by name, the lord of the Ḥaihayas, who was endowed with a thousand arms. He grew quite restless by virtue of his great strength, and became a source of great annoyance even to the gods, yakshas and saints. All living beings were much harassed by this mighty lord of the Haihayas, whereupon God Viṣṇu in consultation with Indra [11] planned to put an end of him. Once it happened that, when the sons of Jamadagni were away, Arjuna came up to Jamadagni's hermitage where the saint was practising penance. His wife, Reṇukā, welcomed the king with all hospitality. But the proud Arjuna, however, requited the hospitality shown to him by forcibly carrying away from the hermitage the calf of the sage's sacrificial cow whose milk supplied the sacred butter, unheeding the loud lowing of the cow. And more, he wantonly cut down the large trees belonging to the hermitage. When Rāma returned, his father told him all that had happened. Full of anger he rushed towards Kṛtavīrya's son, and putting forth all his valour on the field of battle cut Arjuna's thousand arms. Whereupon, Arjuna's sons attacked Jamadagni while Rāma was away from the hermitage and slew him. Paraśurāma then vowed at his father's funeral pyre to exterminate the whole Kshatriya race, and began his campaign first by putting Arjuna's sons to death. The son of the Bhṛgu's race "of exceeding strength in the field of battle, and possessed of valour suited to a heroic soul, and comparable to the god of death himself", then took up his weapon in great wrath, and single-handed thrice-seven times exterminated the whole of the Kshatriya race on the earth. And, in the tract of land called Samantapañcaka, five lakes of blood were made by this mighty scion of Bhṛgu's race, where he offered libations (tarpaṇa) to his fore-fathers. The son of Jamadagni of dreaded name, is then said to have performed a mighty sacrifice to gratify the lord of the celestials, in which he bestowed the earth upon the high-souled Kāśyapa, at whose command it was again divided among the priests. The exterminator of the military race then retired to mount

(11) It will be interesting to note that Ślokas 9 to 19 of adhyāya 115, dealing with the part played by Viṣṇu, Indra and other gods in the birth of Paraśurāma, are omitted in two of the manuscripts of the Southern recension of the Mahābhārata that I have examined—one, a Malayalam Manuscript of the Pāliyam family now in my possession, and the other a Grantha MS. No. 1666, of the Mysore Library, lent for my reference through the Viswabharati. But this portion is found in a Bengali MS. No. 327 of the Viswabharati Library, which I have compared with the Bombay edition of the Mahābhārata. There is no doubt that this portion is a later interpolation, brought in to establish the divine origin of Paraśurāma.

Mahendra and engaged himself in penance of an exceedingly severe form. Paraśurāma is said to have shown himself to Yudhiṣṭhira, the virtuous king, who with his younger brothers worshipped Rāma and *paid the very highest honours to all those members of the twice-born class*.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the above version of the Paraśurāma legend:—

(i) Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni and Reṇukā, had the Brahman and Kshatriya blood in him of at least two generations; though born of a priestly caste, Paraśurāma was of a character fit for the military order.

(ii) Paraśurāma was the upholder of the rights and privileges of the Brahmans; he exterminated the entire military caste thrice-seven times and bestowed the whole earth on the priests.

(iii) Paraśurāma belonged to a period of Indian History when the worst animosity existed between Brahmans and Kshatriyas. The creation of five pools of blood even after slaying the Kshatriyas twenty-one times, and the offering of libations to his fore-fathers with that blood, are sufficient proof of the nature of their hostility.

(iv) Paraśurāma, after the extermination of the Kshatriyas and after bestowing the earth upon Kāśyapa, retired to mount Mahendra and engaged himself in penance.

(v) Arjuna Kārtavīrya was the worst type of Kshatriya that ever existed. Immoral and ungodly he was the most unchivalrous king on the face of the earth. By forcibly carrying away from the hermitage the calf of the sacrificial cow, Arjuna showed the greatest abhorrence to Vedic rites, and thereby challenged the entire priestly order.

The above story was told by one Akritavraṇa, a follower of Paraśurāma, who was among those sages who received Yudhiṣṭhira during his sojourn on the Mahendra hill. There is another version of Paraśurāma's story in the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata (adhyāyas 48 and 49) told in a different spirit and in a different way. This time it was narrated by Kṛṣṇa, who was proceeding to Kurukshetra with the Pāṇḍava brothers to be present near the side of Bhīṣhma who was about to leave this world. Pointing to the five lakes of blood formed by Rāma at Samantapañcaka, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Yudhiṣṭhira about the prowess of Jamadagni's son: "It was here that the puissant Rāma freed the earth of Kshatriyas thrice-seven times!"

In this second version of the story, Arjuna Kārtavīrya, the king of the Haihayas, is spoken of as a highly virtuous monarch. With his thousand arms Arjuna subjugated the whole earth and in the end gave it away "unto the Brahmans in a horse-sacrifice". It was Arjuna's powerful and haughty sons who seized and brought away the calf of Jamadagni's sacrificial cow, that became the indirect cause of Kārtavīrya's death. Consequently, Paraśurāma made the earth destitute of Kshatriyas twenty-one times, and then performed a horse sacrifice, at the completion of which he gave away the earth to Kāśyapa as a sacrificial present.

The change brought about in the story of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, in his attitude towards Brahmans and their rites presupposes an advanced society, which in itself is a proof of the later interpolation of this second version of the Paraśurāma legend. In the Vanaparvan, Kārtavīrya is described as having grown restless by virtue of his power, and trampled upon gods and yakṣhas and saints, and harassed all the living beings on the face of the earth; he affronted Indra, and insulted Jamadagni by requiting the hospitality extended to him by his wife Reṇukā by forcibly carrying away from the hermitage the calf of the sage's sacrificial cow. In the Śāntiparvan, on the contrary, Arjuna and Paraśurāma are spoken of as on equal footing—both as of highly virtuous character, both as having subjugated the whole earth, and both as having made a present of it "unto the Brahmans in a horse sacrifice".

What is more interesting in this second version of the legend is the story of Paraśurāma's after-life. [12] In the Vanaparvan, the story abruptly ends with the retirement of Rāma to Mahendra—the monarch of hills—where he is supposed to dwell even now engaged in penance. In the Śāntiparvan Kāśyapa, after receiving the earth as a sacrificial present from Paraśurāma, is said to have asked the latter to repair to the shores of the southern ocean, in order that the remnant of the Kṣhatriyas left alive might be preserved for ruling over the earth. At Kāśyapa's bidding the ocean suddenly receded and a region called Śūrpāraka was created for Jamadagni's son. [13]

It will not be disputed that, by the time the legend of Paraśurāma received its second form, the priestly classes were enjoying a distinctly superior position in the Hindu society. Kingship would seem to have virtually become a dependency to priesthood, for we find even the mighty Arjuna consenting to pay homage to the Brahmans. In adhyayas 152—157 of the Anuśāsanaparvan of the Mahābhārata, a long discourse between god Vāyu and Arjuna Kārtavīrya has been recorded regarding the ultimate result of paying reverence to *vipras*. Arjuna taxed the god of partiality to Brahmans. But Vāyu, after adducing various reasons, at last convinced the king of the superior might of the Brahmans. In adhyāya 84 of the Anuśāsanaparvan, we similarly find the Ṛṣhis advising Paraśurāma, who has bestowed the whole earth on the Brahmans but is still being troubled with qualms about the deeds he has committed, to bestow largesse of cows, land and other riches, especially gold, on the *vipras*.

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(12) Śāntiparvan, adh. 49, v. v. 65—89.

(13) This portion of the story is found recorded in both the Southern and the Bengali recensions of the Mahābhārata that I have examined, namely, (i) the Pāliyam family MS. (ii) the Mysore Library MS. No. 1666, (iii), (iv) and (v) the Viswabharati Library MSS. Nos. 1096 (Malayalam), 6 and 14 (Bengali). While in the Southern MSS. the place name is "Śūrpāraka", the Bengali MSS. read it as "Śūrpākara". In the tenth Nasic cave Inscription of the second century A. D. it is read as "Śūrpāraga". (Epigraphica India, Vol. VIII, p. 78).

PARASURAMA IN THE RAMAYANA AND THE PURANAS.

The story of Paraśurāma in the Rāmāyaṇa is more in alliance with the first of the two legends quoted from the Mahābhārata. In the Rāmāyaṇa (adhyayas 74—75) Paraśurāma is described as a terrible figure with his matted locks and his irresistible axe and bow, "unmovable like Kailāsa and burning like kālāgni". In such a terrible mood the son of Jamadagni appears before Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, who was on his way to Ayodhya from the kingdom of Janaka after his marriage with Sītā. Paraśurāma pleased with Rama, presents him his Vaiṣṇava bow which was originally offered to Ṛcīka by God Viṣṇu. The son of Jamadagni then narrates his own previous story to Rāma telling him how his father Jamadagni was slain by Arjuna, and how he himself exterminated the entire Kshatriya race time after time, offered the whole earth to Kāśyapa as a sacrificial gift, and thereafter retired to mount Mahendra.

In the Bhāgavatapurāna (book IX, ch. 15—16) and the Viṣṇupurāṇa[14] (book IV, ch. 11) we have the later developments of the Paraśurāma legend. In the former we are told that sage Jamadagni was greatly incensed to hear of the death of Arjuna Kārtavīrya at the hands of his son, Paraśurāma. The father tells his son that by slaying Arjuna he has committed the greatest sin, for, to kill a king formally installed on the throne is worse than to kill a Brahmana![15] He therefore asks Paraśurāma to expiate his sin by visiting holy places with his mind intent upon Achyuta (the imperishable). In the Viṣṇupurāna and the Bhāgavatpurāṇa, Paraśurāma is mentioned as an avatāra of Viṣṇu—as the sixth among the ten incarnations, an idea which never occurred to the writers of the Mahābhārata or the Rāmāyana!! In the Viṣṇupurāṇa, Paraśurāma is mentioned as Nārāyanāṃśa, while in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa as Vāsudevāṃsā.

BRAHMANS VERSUS KSHATRIYAS.

This progressive development of Paraśurāma's legend, as it must strike any casual reader, has a greater and deeper significance than the mere change of story. It indicates a prolonged struggle between the two upper classes of the Hindu community, which terminated in the subjugation of the Kshatriyas by the Brahmans led by the warrior-sage, Paraśurāma. The seeds of this dissension between the two prominent communities were sown in the Vedic period itself. It was most acute at the time when Jainism and Buddhism sprang up and brought into existence two powerful organisations. It continued and extended to the beginning of the Gupta period, or at least, till the second century after Christ.

The story of Rāma Mārgaveya and his wars with king Viśvantara in the cause of Śyāparṇas, given in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII. 27), is a clear indication of the struggle for authority by the Brahmans over the ruling class in the later Vedic period. Coming down to historical times, we find the elaborate

(14) See also Muir's "Sanskrit Texts"—Part I, p. 160 and 171.

(15) See what Manu says about the divine origin of Kings—Manu-Smṛti, VII, v. v. 4—9.

ritual and bloody sacrifices favoured by the Brahmans being strongly opposed by princes, like Mahāvīra and Buddha. As a result of their continued opposition these sacrifices of the Brahmans which formed a great source of profit and influence to them fell into disrepute, and people began to seek for other and better paths to the goal of salvation. "Intelligent members of the governing classes,[16] who were regarded as Kshatriyas by the Brahmans, were inclined to consider themselves better men than their spiritual guides, whose arrogant class-pride aroused warm opposition. The racial distinction between the Brahmans and their pupils necessarily evoked and encouraged the growth of independent views on philosophy and religion. The educated men of the upper classes, called Kshatriyas by the Brahmans, rebelled against the claim of the strangers[17] to the exclusive possession of superior knowledge and the key of the door to salvation."——"It will sound most amazing", writes Rhys David in his Buddhist India, p. 60, "to those familiar with Brahman pretensions (either in modern times in India or in priestly books such as Manu and the Epics) to hear the Brahman spoken of as "low-born". Yet that precisely is an epithet applied to them in comparison with the kings and nobles. And it ought to open our eyes as to their relative importance in these early times".

These dissensions between the priests and the ruling classes extended from before the sixth century B. C. to the times of the Gupta kings in the fourth century A. D., when the Hindu renaissance or reaction began to set in. During all these times no royal patronage had been extended to Brahmanism, but from the fourth century onwards we have ample epigraphical evidences to the contrary. In the second century A. D., we have inscriptions recording some instances of grants of lands to Brahmans.[18] In the third century also there are a few such instances; but from the fourth century onwards, these inscriptions have become quite numerous, showing a marked rise in the Brahman influence. The Gupta kings of the fourth and fifth centuries are stated to have performed sacrifices and given numerous gifts of lands to Brahmans, and to the temples in their charge. These facts may perhaps lead one to surmise that the first Paraśurāma legend of the Āraṇyaparvan recording the grant of the whole earth to Brahmans as a sacrificial fee cannot be earlier than the second century after Christ, when we have the first record of the grant of land made to Brahmans. It may be remembered in this connection that there are numerous epigraphical and other records dating from the 3rd century B. C. to the 2nd century A. D. evidencing similar gifts made by kings, princes, chiefs, merchants, artisans and

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(16) Writes Mr. Vincent Smith in the Oxford History of India, p. 48, 49.

(17) Mr. Vincent Smith is almost certain that the Śaiśunāgas, Lichhavis, and several other ruling families or clans in or near Magadha were not Indo-Aryan by blood. "They were," he thinks, "hill-men of the Mongoliyan type". They regarded the Brahmans as strangers.

(18) See Rhys David's Buddhist India, pp. 150—151. Bhandarkar's Early History of the Deccan, section IV.

others, but not one of them is given in support of anything with which Brahmans had any connection. Paraśurāma's legend and the legend of Arjuna Kārtavīrya recorded in the Śāntiparvan appear to be still later,—written perhaps about the beginning of the Gupta period, when the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans began to live together mutually adjusting their claims over the temporal and spiritual rights.

PARASURAMA—HIS PLACE IN HISTORY.

Although shrouded in mythology, Paraśurāma is still a living personality. In the history of Hindu India his place has no parallel. As the upholder of the rights and privileges of the priestly class of Brahmans, Paraśurāma's position is unchallenged. Whether he is identified [19] or not with Rāma Mārgaveya of the Aitareya Brāhmana, who had championed the cause of the priests, Paraśurāma will have to be assigned to a period before the sixth century B. C., when the arrogant class pride of the Brahmans had begun to arouse warm opposition from the ruling classes. The story of Parāsurāma completely routing the Kshatriyas time after time might have been handed down from generation to generation, until it came to be written in the great Epic, the Mahābhārata. Later developments have given Paraśurāma a still worthier place, and we find this once famous hero of the Brahmans being reckoned as one of the ten incarnations of God Viṣṇu, and even worshipped by many Hindus.

Paraśurāma is an all-India figure. He has left his mark in every nook and corner of this Bhāratavarṣa. From distant Assam in the north-east to Cape Comorin in the South, this valiant son of Jamadagni is regarded with a certain amount of reverential fear even now. The following half a dozen instances of Paraśurāma's legend current to-day in the different parts of India will give us an idea of its extent and popularity in this country.

(i) On the eastern border of the Lakhimpur district in Assam, a sacred pool has been formed at a spot where the river emerges from the mountains and is flanked on both sides by hills. It is believed that Paraśurāma has surrendered to this pool the axe with which he destroyed the Kshatriyas, and it is in consequence visited by Hindu pilgrims from every part of India.[20]

(ii) Kundian in the State of Udaipur, in Rajputana, situated about fifty miles to the north-east of the city, is another place of interest having some connection with Paraśurāma's exploits. There are many temples here, and also a pool called Mātṛkundian which is celebrated as the place where the sins of Paraśurāma has been expiated on his bathing in its sacred waters. A fair lasting for three days is held here in the month of May and is largely attended by pilgrims who take their bath in the pool.[21]

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(19) As Prof. Max Muller and Lassen would do.

(20) Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. IX, p. 8.

(21) „ „ Vol. XVI, p. 26.

(iii) Near the Kangra district, in the Punjab, there stands a temple dedicated to Paraśurāma, in which is deposited a copper-plate deed of grant in Sanskrit (of A. D. 612—613) recording the gift of the village to Brahmans studying Atharva Veda.[22]

(iv) In an old village, in the Bijapur district, Bombay, there is an axe-shaped rock on the river bank in commemoration of Paraśurāma. The latter is said to have washed his axe at the spot after his destruction of the Kshatriya race. On a rock in the river, Paraśurāma's foot-prints are shown. Near by is a fine old temple of Rāmaliṅga.[23]

(v) In a village in the Native State of Mysore, there is a temple dedicated to Paraśu, the irresistible axe of Paraśurāma. The ancient name of this village is said to be Bhārgavapura.[24]

(vi) There is a sacred pool at Gokarnam, further north of Mangalore, said to have been dedicated to Śiva by Paraśurāma. There is yet another pool in Cape Comorin, dedicated by Kumāra, the son of Śiva, by bathing in which Paraśurāma had purged himself of all his sins, which is also considered to be very sacred.

This last incident brings us to a still further legend of Paraśurāma recorded in a much later work, known as Keralamāhātmya of the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa.[25] Here, at the bidding of the sages, Paraśurāma after giving away the earth as a sacrificial fee to Brahmans is stated to have propitiated God Śiva, who having been pleased sent his son Kumāra to help Rāma in getting a strip of land to live in from God Varuṇa. Both of them, it is said, proceeded to the present Cape Comorin where, at the command of the Lord of the Sea, Paraśurāma threw his axe towards the north which fell at a place called Gokarnam. At once the sea receded, and formed a long stretch of land from Comorin to Gokarnam for Rāma to live in. The son of Jamadagni gave the name "Kerala" to this new country, which he again presented to the Vedic Brahmans whom he brought from the Banks of the Kṛṣṇā and the Godāvarī. He established so many temples in Kerala and himself, in the end, disappeared. There is a spot still kept very sacred within the temple of Kailāsanātha at Trichur, Cochin State, where Paraśurāma is said to have made his last appearance.

This and other similar legends current throughout India unquestionably establish that Paraśurāma has been a powerful leader of the Brahman colonists of India, especially of those who colonized part of the land lying to the south of the Vindhyas. The story that Paraśurāma was sent away by Kāśyapa

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(22) Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XIX, p. 124.

(23) ,, ,, Vol. V, p. 129.

(24) ,, ,, Vol. XIII, p. 148.

(25) The Bhāratavilāsam edition of 1912, Trichur—adhyāyas 12 and 15. See also "Keralotpathi"—a Malayalam work recording Kerala traditions—Keralachintāmaṇi edition of 1901, Trichur.

to the shores of the southern ocean,[26] where the sea receded and formed a land for him and his followers, called Sūrpāraka,[27] indicates perhaps the first Brahman colonization of the land lying to the west of the Western Ghats. It might be that these colonists under Paraśurāma had first settled down on the banks of the Kṛṣṇa and the Godāvarī, and afterwards migrated to Sūrpāraka along the source of those rivers. Another branch of the same colonists might have migrated into further south of Gokarnam and settled down in Kerala which was found to be very prosperous to live in.

We have the first mention of the kingdom of "Keralaputra" in one of the edicts of Asoka in the middle of the third century B. C., when the kings of the Ādi-Chera dynasty ruled over Kerala.[28] The late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, discussing at great length the approximate date of the Aryan settlement in the Deccan, says that they must have penetrated to the south of the Vindhyas after about the beginning of the seventh century B. C. "Before B. C. 350", he concludes, "they had become familiar with the whole country down to Tanjore and Madura".[29] The first Brahman colonists under Paraśurāma must therefore be said to have settled down on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā and the Godāvarī by about the seventh century B. C. and migrated to Śūrpāraka (Konkaṇadeśa) and further south (Keraladeśa) shortly afterwards.[30] Since the kingdom of the "Keralaputras" (Adi-Cheras?) had been known to Asoka in the third century B. C., there cannot be anything improbable in fixing the date of the first Aryan colonization of the kingdoms to the west of the Western Ghats

(26) This story is still current in the Konkaṇadeśa, a strip of land lying between Gova on the south and Daman on the north. Paraśurāma is said to have performed a sacrifice here for which he brought Brahmans from other parts of the country. In a village in the Ratnagiri district there is a temple dedicated to Paraśurāma; and the village itself is called after his name. (See also foot note 13).

(27) Sūrpāraka has been correctly identified with the modern Supara or Sopara—Soupara of Ptolemy—in the district of Thana, 37 miles north of Bombay and about four miles north-west of Bassein, where one of the edicts of Asoka was published. (The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India by Nundo Lal Dey p. 197). Paraśurāma is said to have resided on the Chaturaṅgaṇa hill of Śūrpāraka-kṣtra. According to Buddhist writers Gautama Buddha in one of his births had been a Bodhisatva of Soppara. Jain writers make frequent mention of Soppara. (Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XXIII p. 87). Periplus mentions it as a market-town on the West-coast. (Schoff's translation—1912 ed.—p. 43).

(28) Vide for literary evidences also Keralacaritam (in Malayalam) by Attoor Krishna Pisharody—pp. 21—38.

(29) Bhandarkar's Early History of the Deccan—section III.

(30) Vincent Smith in his Oxford History of India, p. 14, accepts the fact that "the peaceful penetration of the Deccan by Indo-Aryan emissaries began many centuries before the Christian era".

two or three centuries before the time of Asoka, i.e., in the fifth or the sixth century B. C.

THE CULT OF PARASURAMA.

Before concluding this paper, one more important point may be mentioned in regard to the significance of Paraśurāma's cult now prevalent in India. We have already seen the existence of a number of temples and sacred pools all over the country, from the distant Assam to Cape Comorin, connected in one way or other with Paraśurāma, which in consequence are being visited by Hindu pilgrims from every part of India. In Kerala, Paraśurāma is a household name among the Malabar Brahmans (the Nambūdiris) who worship him and regard him as their great protector. Almost all the prominent temples in Kerala (both of Viṣṇu and of Śiva) are said to have been founded by Paraśurāma and presented by him to his Brahman followers. We have observed Paraśurāma as being spoken of as Narāyanāṃśa and Vāsudevāṃśa in the Viṣṇupurāṇa. In the latter Parauśrāma is mentioned as having been asked by his father to expiate his sin by visiting holy places *with his mind intent upon Achyuta.* In the Rāmāyaṇa, Paraśurāma is said to have offered the son of Daśaratha the great Vaiṣṇava bow, which was originally presented by Viṣṇu to Ṛcīka. Thus, to all Vaiṣṇavites, Paraśurāma is a great devotee of Viṣṇu, and he is regarded and worshipped by them as Viṣṇu's avatāra or incarnation.

To the Śaivaites, too, Paraśurāma is no less a saint and devotee of Śiva. All his legends speak of him as having retired to Kailāsa, or mount Mahendra, to propitiate God Śiva, either to get possession of a weapon or to procure a strip of land to live in. In the Karṇaparvan of the Mahābhārata (adhyāya 34, v. v. 128—154), there is a long passage describing how Paraśurāma propitiated Mahādeva in order to obtain divine weapons from him. We all know how the breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāmachandra had provoked the dreadful wrath of Paraśurāma and made him come down from his seclusion on the Mahendra hill.

There is every possibility that Paraśurāma, the great leader and hero of the Brahmans, came to be regarded as being connected with Vāsudeva or Mahādeva only at a later period, when, as a result of the evolution among Brahmanical Hindus of the religion of Bhakti, there took place a thorough change of outlook in the whole Hindu mentality and a number of cults, including that of Viṣṇu and of Śiva, was brought into existence.[31]

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(31) It was perhaps during this period that various interpolations came to be added to the legends in the Mahābhārata. See foot-note (11).